



Kaleidoscope: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences



Vol 1 Issue 1, December 2025, 170-177, Journal homepage: <https://kaleidoscopejournal.in/>

The Meaning of the Value and Its Nature in the Context of Axiology

Dr. Siba Prasad Chaudhury

Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, K. J. Roy Government General Degree College, Mejia, Bankura, W.B., India

Abstract

Axiology is a component of ethics. It is the general theory of values and involves the study and analysis of things that are ultimately valuable or unworthy. Human ideas, wants, and longings are not separate from values. Fundamentally, values are relational. It seems to be a partnership. Our life experience prevents us from perceiving it. In a human community, values are placed in a hierarchical manner according to their significance and specific social norms that stem from the group's practical and spiritual needs. Along with poles, values possess degrees. From unpleasant to agreeable, from appealing to unattractive, from virtuous to sinful, and from just to unjust, there are many degrees. Value is a pure and necessary item. Social-human action produces values. Value is a latent model for action as well as an impulse to act. From an axiological perspective, a person gains worth by being someone, and being someone is defined by doing something. Value adds a human element to meeting human needs and creates new societal and human needs as a result of cultural production. Axiological investigation looks at the hidden aspects of human behaviour rather than the obvious ones. The goal of the paper is to examine the axiological dimensions of the nature and meaning of value.

Article History

Received
October 19, 2025

Accepted
December 25, 2025

Keywords: Value, Axiology, Ethics, Good, Truth, Beauty

Introduction

The tailpiece of ethics is axiology. The Greek words ‘axios’, meaning evaluation or value, and ‘logos’, meaning knowledge, combine to form the concept of axiology. Therefore, the study of the general theory or science of values is generally referred to as axiology (Findlay 1). It is the general theory of values and involves the study and analysis of things that are ultimately valuable or unworthy. In the entire history of philosophy, axiology is nothing new. It has always existed, but it has always been primarily subservient to the discipline of ethics, which investigates what ought to be done or why. There is no denying that axiology is a subfield of ethics, although it might be argued that the latter transcends the former. Besides uncovering the complex relationship between object and subject, axiology aids in establishing overarching values and formulating a cohesive theory of values, all the while steering clear of vagueness and bias. This relationship between object and subject gives value to objects, actions, processes, and human creation. It also offers a fresh, productive foundation for investigating human subjectivity (Ginsberg 12). The broad values that make up its area of study, distinguished from the particular values addressed by specialized sciences, form axiology, an independent domain within philosophy. Axiology emphasizes the link between social and historical changes in forming values and their incorporation into individual motivations within the context of human experience, understanding, and behaviours. Humans encounter various values, connect purpose values with means values, and evaluate values according to set criteria in order to determine their individual objectives.

Value and Its Nature and Meaning

The word ‘value’ is used differently depending on the issue. Here, we shall not be interested in some of these purposes. The usage of this term to describe the truth-value of propositions will not be of interest to us. We will not concentrate on its significance to a variable’s worth. Certainly, the list of values is limitless as new ones constantly appear, spanning from dance or fashion to science and art, where remarkable thinkers are recognized for generating new values. Various values have different degrees of importance and are not equally significant. Ideal values differ from goods values, which manifest in cultural products and ascribe worth to items, whereas ideal values envision actions within a realm of imagination. Therefore, while determining the objectives of human action, values are never equally important. We now focus on defining value and its characteristics. It is a challenging question for us in the postmodern and late modern eras. According to some, value is nothing at all, as it is not a fact. According to some, value is essentially a human construct and does not constitute actuality (Achtenberg

8). We cannot be conscious of value if it is nothing at all. The creation of value is more cognitively essential than awareness of it, if value is a human construct.

Most people agree that value is an economic notion. Value has long been a part of the economic meaning. For this reason, English utilizes the specific word ‘worth’ in addition to the general phrase ‘value.’ If an item fulfils a human need, it is considered valuable (Ginsberg 12). Because it satisfies hunger, food has worth. Anything that preserves or advances our lives has value. Food is valuable because it keeps us alive. According to Wilbur Marshall Urban, “[t]hat alone results in the development of selves or self-realization and is ultimately and intrinsically valuable” (Urban 215-216). Animals and objects of desire are not all that humans are. Humans are selves, spirits, or individuals. Things that encourage self-realization are intrinsically valuable. Examples of values include individual indivisibility, the apprehension of tertiary qualities, an emotional a priori, a life-intensifying factor, and the expression of pleasure, desire, interest, and pure rational will. Nietzsche aims to restore the Aristotelian idea of value, contests the dominant decadent values, and starts a reformation of all values, which he refers to as the “transvaluation of all values” (Ginsberg 11). Kant also discusses the philosophical dimensions of value without specifically utilizing the term in its axiological connotation.

Philosophical Exposition of value

In this context, the term ‘value’ pertains to the philosophical ideas of goodness, superiority, appeal, and the attributes assigned to particular objects, conditions, and scenarios. This value is evidently linked, and in essence, associated with attitudes we will call valuations, for which there are established philosophical concepts like loving, valuing, esteeming, cherishing, and having a positive disposition toward something. The first and most basic question to be addressed by axiomatic ethics is the nature of value, the store of something, which is also, of course, a clearer and more comprehensible thing than the value to which we attribute objects under its influence. Instead of seeming like only personal fantasies, values are actual parts of life. The notion of value is used anytime there is a real, active interaction between items on the one hand and needs, attitudes, and desires on the other. Value is not an object, an ideal object, or a point of occurrence in one’s own experience; therefore, it cannot be limited to its object, conceptual transfer, or psychological aspects.

Although values depend on their material carriers to survive, they are not objects, for they are not to be confused with them. A tangible object, be it a piece of marble, a sunrise, or a man’s face, always has a certain majesty about it. Value persists even when divorced from its physical manifestation. Values are inherent, yet they always need a carrier or bearer. A flower

or painting's beauty, a person's goodness of heart, or a tool's utility are all examples of these qualities.

Values may have nothing to do with anything outside of ourselves. Since personal preferences can only allude to mental processes, they have the power to subvert the world. As a result, values now have the same epistemological standing as the 'philosopher's stone' (Ginsberg 11). While some scholars contend that since values exist, they must be objective, others disagree, and some continue to believe that values are only subjective expressions of emotion. Human ideas, desires, and needs are not separate from values. Values can continue to be examined concerning other realms of reality, provided that both ancient and contemporary philosophers perceive them as objects, abstract objects, or reflections of emotional and sensory experiences.

Value transformation emerges as a realm of feelings and decisions, assessment and discernment. It cannot persist as physical reality does, unless it actively generates desire at the level of immediate experience and assessment, and expresses it in an understandable language. Finding a distinct place for the realm of value is crucial, as it serves, firstly, as the essential, inherent alignment of human actions, and, secondly, as the driving force behind our entire existence. Our existence, professions, and aspirations are encompassed by an axiological context.

Value cannot be diminished to other aspects of reality, physical objects, abstract objects, or psychological-spiritual experiences, but this does not imply that it cannot mirror anything that is fundamental and pure regarding an objective existence. People live up to their values. They come from and behave in the context of living. The cognitive depiction of an item is essential yet inadequate for its worth, even though it is deemed acceptable. We are aware of a great deal of information without evaluating it as beneficial or detrimental, good or terrible, lovely or ugly; because it seems insignificant to us, it has no value. Because language sometimes conceals the rationale behind value determinations, an analysis based just on logic is unable to exhaust values.

Value does not indicate what is sought; rather, it indicates what is desirable. It is acknowledged that value is the object of desire. We can possess numerous desires, such as a luxury vehicle or an extravagant home, alongside our basic needs like communication, employment, relaxation, and fulfilling our spirituality or morality, as achieving these makes us appear more impressive to others. Human values are deemed significant only when the human realm is predominantly viewed as a realm of meaning. Since the signifier only joins the signified

in the communicative event, or speech act, values should be seen to be part of both the human action and communication domains. It is only in comparison to the changes and variations experienced by favoured options that value appears as something pure and necessary. This occurs because the idea of value is predicated on a theoretical consistency of choice that is nearly flawless in comparison to real choices.

Value represents a social connection that conveys a viewpoint concerning facts or objects, founded on a consensus, historically shaped by social and cultural contexts and ideals, regarding the attributes and needs of those facts and objects. Thus, value manifests as a connection. Our life experiences do not allow us to perceive it. We cannot understand and recover the active relationship in the historical and sociocultural context in which it takes place unless the object has value and it is recognized as such, or unless the subject is able to evaluate and value it. Here, Goethe's advice, "[i]f you are willing to enjoy your own value, and then confer value onto the world" (Ginsberg 21), could not be more appropriate.

In essence, values are relational. They become intrinsic attributes of an object that has value through the subject-object connection. When value is seen as a relationship between an object that holds worth and a subject that has the capacity to appreciate it, rather than as an inherent quality, the main relational factors determining value are polarity and hierarchy. The poles of value are revealed by polarity, whereas the degrees of value are shown by hierarchy. Value suggests a ranking – a sequential arrangement of items from lesser to greater – and duality, an option for yes and an option for no, approval and disapproval, based on their significance to the individual (Ginsberg 17). The relationship between subject and object that expresses an individual's or a community's assessment of natural, social, psychological, and possibly socially and historically conditioned needs, desires, aspirations, etc., through polarity and hierarchy is called value. Value assessment serves as the rational core of valuation preferences. The precision of a value judgment is equal to its cognitive worth. This concern is tackled by the axiocentric human ontology, which considers the shift from a logical to an axiological perspective to elucidate the importance of the value assessment.

Hierarchy of value

Value transcends individuality. In a particular human community, it entails appreciation at the level of the communal consciousness. By connecting things to ideals constructed in accordance with society-specific standards, values prove to be realities rather than a translation of this or that personal preference. Examples of descriptive statements are, for example, I prefer tennis to football, or this flower costs a dollar. Whereas the former is based on individual preference, the

latter is based on judgement of value (Ginsberg 6). Values are structured in a hierarchical fashion according to specific social criteria that are drawn from the practical and spiritual demands of a community. The hierarchy of values does not have a set structure.

The knowledge hierarchy is horizontal, at least where it splits from its axiological component, whereas the values hierarchy is vertical. The order of knowledge concerns coordination, while the order of values pertains to relationships of subordination and superordination. Ascending from the inferior to the superior is the direction of the value hierarchy. Under certain social-historical circumstances, values are arranged hierarchically in every human group. The significance of values in this community is reflected in the scale rating.

Values imply hierarchy—unequal ranking. In situations where the breach of equality or non-equivalence occurs, such as when one item needs to be superior to another, or when something is viewed as better than another and merits precedence, the idea of value comes into play. The values can thus be compared.

The word ‘value’ can be used in both specific and general contexts. It implies just a positive value in the limited sense. In a wide sense, it denotes both positive and negative, as well as maybe neutral, values. Anything that has neither good nor negative merit is said to have neutral value. Everything will have value since everything has positive, negative, or neutral value if the term ‘value’ is applied in the broadest meaning imaginable. Similar to positive and negative values, neutral values are likewise a sort of value (Lemos 2). Positive and negative values have comparable meanings in general. Positive value is roughly equivalent to good, and negative value is roughly equivalent to bad. Consequently, anything that has a positive value is considered good. Anything with a negative value is therefore considered bad.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic values are the two main species of value, and instrumental and contributing value are the two main species of extrinsic value. A product, event, or situation’s intrinsic, instrumental, and contributing values come together to form the idea of total value, which is derived from these species. An intrinsic value is valuable in and of itself; an instrumental value is valuable due to its outcome.

Urban distinguishes between organic and hyper-organic values, with social and spiritual values being the two main types of hyper-organic values. Organic value includes recreational, economic, and bodily worth. Additionally, social values include character and association values. All of these social and organic values are essential to the fulfilment of individual values. Spiritual values include religious, intellectual, and aesthetic values. Spiritual values are considered inherent values and are greater than social values, while organic values are lower

than social values. It is believed that virtue, kindness, beauty, and truth are inherent qualities. The inherent value that fulfills man's volitional nature is known as moral value. It is not reducible to either beauty or truth, yet it is related to both. Truth, beauty, or ugliness do not define rightness or wrongness. Therefore, moral values and aesthetic values are not the same thing. It is unique and *sui generis*. Urban states:

[t]he moral value of an act is always an actual social value, and the demand presupposed by moral obligation toward such an act, and by moral judgment upon it, always represents a concrete, relative value determined by the laws of social synergy. Moral values are actual, not ideal, as in the case of personal values. To this statement the 'ideal society' for which the reformer works seems to present a contradiction. The values there are ideal, and at the same time apparently moral and social. (Urban 351)

Conclusion

One must embrace and promote certain moral principles in order to handle ethical problems professionally. According to a widely accepted assumption in organizational behaviour theory, our behaviour is ultimately determined by our values. Values are essential to the development of our attitudes and our reactions to other people and circumstances. Our values impact our attitudes, and our attitudes impact our actions. The realization of the inherent values or spiritual value—that is, truth, beauty, goodness, or virtue in their correct relationship to one another—is the ultimate good, or the highest good, according to the value perspective (Werkmeister 260). The instrumental values are the foundation for achieving the intrinsic values, and they are also properly subordinated to the intrinsic values in the highest good. This results in self-realization. Wright refers to the standard as value eudemonism, which is the ultimate form of personal well-being and the universal good for all people. It draws attention to the idea of self-realization or self-perfection (Ginsberg 129). Realizing one's own ideals through appropriate interpersonal interactions is the core of self-realization. Perfectionism is hence closely associated with eudemonism in the sense of standardizing value.

People's actions and thoughts are greatly influenced by their values. Virtues have a direct impact on our ethical behaviour. The virtues of wisdom, knowledge, love, humanity, justice, temperance, fairness, kindness, courage, integrity, spirituality, and transcendence are among the virtues that social scientists have recognized as seemingly universal. Wisdom is derived from one's ability to make informed decisions, know what to do, and distinguish

between right and wrong. Omnipotence, something stronger and more enduring than the person, is acknowledged by moral leaders (Kerns 47). Leaders that are primarily motivated by self-interest and personal power have limited effectiveness and sincerity. Recognizing right from wrong and acting accordingly, disregarding the personal repercussions, is the essence of acting with integrity and ethics. It means being ethically upright despite challenges. Value generates new social and human needs through cultural creation and infuses a personal element to address individual requirements.

Works Cited

- Achtenberg, Deborah. *Cognition of Value in Aristotle's Ethics*. State University of New York Press, 2002.
- Findlay, J. N. *Axiological Ethics*. Macmillan, 1970.
- Ginsberg, Robert, editor. *The Mystery of Values: Studies in Axiology*. Rodopi, 2000.
- Kerns, Charles D. *Value-Centered Ethics: A Proactive System to Shape Ethical Behavior*. HRD Press, 2005.
- Lemos, Ramon M. *The Nature of Value: Axiological Investigations*. University Press of Florida, 1995.
- Urban. Wilbur Marshall. *Valuation: Its Nature and Laws*, Swan Sonnenschein and Co, 1909.
- Werkmeister. W. H. *Theories of Ethics: A Study in Moral Obligation*, Johnsen Publishing Company, 1961.